



DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov

**Last
issue
for
2005**



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Holiday calendar

- Christmas eve Saturday, Dec. 24
(get Friday off work)
- Christmas day Sunday, Dec. 25
(get Monday off)
- New Year's eve Saturday, Dec. 31
(get Friday off)
- New Year's day Sunday, Jan. 1
(get Monday off)
- Martin Luther King birthday
holiday Monday, Jan. 16

Above **Mary Jo Kniebbe**, section manager with Saginaw County DHS, and **Veronica Askew** share an intimate moment during Veronica's adoption Nov. 22 in Saginaw. Judge Faye M. Harrison of Saginaw, who presided over the adoption for the 10th Circuit Court Family Division, said: "It is magic to watch the change in children who get permanent loving families through adoption. Seeing the children safe and loved is what keeps the rest of us going."

Adoption day magic in Saginaw

Michigan's third annual Adoption Day took place Nov. 22 when hundreds of families around the state adopted new family members. It was a day for families, adoptive children, friends, relatives, members of the court and DHS offices around the state to rejoice in the miracles of uniting loved ones.

"Veronica was removed at age 5 due to severe abuse and neglect," said Ann Shea of Saginaw County DHS. "Eventually, she became available for adoption."

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The adoption worker, Mary Jo Kniebbe, recruited a family for Veronica who was adopted at age 11. She helped her transition into a home that turned out to be a wonderful and saving family for this child.

"Veronica spoke at our adoption day ceremony about the importance of adoption day and how it saved her life," Shea said. "She was in tears almost her whole speech, remembering the emotion of her own adoption. Veronica has never forgotten the difference Mary Jo made in her life."



Hillsdale County staff that received the President's Award are: (front l-r) **Merry Stuard, Kelli Todoroff, Michelle Brubaker and Susan Mann**. Back row from left: **Linda Shigley, Julie North, Sue Fowle, Renee Gonzales, Cynthia Caskey, Mary Jo Congden, Jill Draper, Rillie Thilo, Laura Nye and Betsy Clark**. **Bob Davis** was unable to attend.

Hillsdale County children's staff honored

From Laura Nye

Hillsdale County DHS, Hillsdale

NyeL@michigan.gov

Hillsdale County DHS has been awarded the President's Award by the Michigan Home-Based Family Services Association. The award was presented Oct. 20, 2005 at the association's annual conference in Frankenmuth. The Hillsdale County children's unit, administrative support, Family to Family facilitator, CPS, foster care and adoption workers were nominated for the award by Julie North, home-based therapist for Highfields, who said this in her nomination letter:

"These people are truly amazing. Their constant support of home based services for the families they are involved with goes beyond what I have seen in other organizations. These workers utilize home based services for their clients before they do anything else. They know and understand that counseling can be hard for a client; therefore they put the client at ease by placing services in their home.

"The Hillsdale County Department of Human Services has been very successful in their efforts to help families keep their situations private. By using home based services, they know their families' confidentiality will be protected. Their commitment to keeping families together is what makes them special. I have dealt with many of these workers after hours as well as in their offices and during their lunch breaks. They are always available to me and ready to help when assistance is needed. This would not be possible without the great support staff and outstanding leadership."

Thanks to **Zoe Lyons** from the DHS Family Advocate's Office as well as **CPS staff from Branch County** who came to the Hillsdale Office for the day to cover while the Hillsdale staff went to Frankenmuth to accept their award.

The Lansing-based association is dedicated to supporting home-based workers by providing training opportunities, a newsletter, and advocating for the home-based family-centered philosophy. To learn more go to www.mihomebased.com/



Belinda Hughes-Arbogast of Oakland County DHS with Gov. Granholm during the Oct. 28 expo in Detroit.

10,000 attend DHS partner expo in Detroit

From Lynn Contreras, Community Resource Coordinator
Oakland County DHS, Bloomfield Hills
ContrerasL@michigan.gov

In partnership with more than 50 public, private and nonprofit organizations from across the southeast Michigan region, Macomb, Oakland and Wayne DHS were primary partners in planning and supporting one of the largest workforce and resource events of its kind in Michigan. The one-day event was organized by a coalition of public and private partnerships spearheaded by the United Way for Southeast Michigan.

This expo, held Oct. 28 at the Michigan State Fairgrounds in Detroit, was about jobs and the resources people need to rebuild their lives. The event attracted more than 150 employers representing 5,700 available jobs. Almost 10,000 job seekers braved an October frost to attend and, while there, had access to employers as well as the various human service agencies from across the region. Human services agencies were there to provide information and help address needs related to training, transportation, substance abuse and other critical services needed to help a person stay employed and restore their independence. Prospective candidates were also able to fill out job applications online at 48 computer terminals provided by Department of Information Technology and supported by Department of Labor and Economic Growth (DLEG).

Unemployment has been the reality for a growing number of Michigan residents who have found it difficult to find employment in the very sluggish Michigan economy. According to DLEG an estimated 145,000 people in Wayne, Oakland and Macomb counties are unemployed.

Belinda Hughes-Arbogast, a family independence manager at the Oakland DHS Walled Lake District, was one of 300 volunteers on hand that day. She said it was an experience that she will not forget. "It was rewarding to see DHS staff from all levels of our organization, including our governor, working together with our community partners to provide information and resources to the community," she said. "By the tremendous turnout, it is obvious that this outreach was needed and appreciated. This is something that I hope continues on a yearly basis."

The expo was a huge success and thanks go out to all in DHS who were involved in making it happen.



Because Tim received so much response to the first article we would like to send a follow up for all of his fans, supporters and coworkers. **Tim Liggins**, foster Care specialist in Kalamazoo County DHS, recently competed in the National Physique Committee National's in Atlanta, Ga. Once again he spent months preparing and following a strict diet and workout regimen. Such hard work paid off and he placed eighth out of almost 40 competitors in his weight group of light heavyweights. This is the biggest amateur show in the Country. Once again we here in Kalamazoo are proud of Tim and his success.
—from **Megan Reetz** and **Sarah McCree**

Date: Dec. 7
To: Roger Christ, District Manager
Wayne County North Central Child & Family Services, Highland Park
Subj: Ian Tschirhart

I just wanted to take a moment to let you know what a wonderful job Ian Tschirhart did on the (name withdrawn for privacy) file, which was a recent Munchausen by Proxy trial. As I'm sure you know, Munchausen by Proxy is a difficult subject matter to grapple with, especially for those of us who are not medical doctors.

After a great deal of leg work that included speaking with numerous doctors, school officials and family members, Ian was able to draft a superb petition that went to the heart of the issues. On the first day of trial, Ian did an excellent job of explaining his investigation and the prior reasonable efforts that had been made by the agency. Aside from his key testimony Ian also was a great assist in the preparation of my case.

He made himself readily available for phone conferences and also brought to my attention new developments in the case. I know Ian always does a fine job, but this time was above and beyond the call of duty and I truly appreciate it.

Please forward this message on to Ian's other supervisors.

Stephanie A. Carl

Assistant Attorney General, Detroit

■ *Ian Tschirhart is a children's protective services specialist with Wayne County NCCFS in Highland Park. "Ian...shows regular dedication to protecting children and a high level of competency in his role," Christ said.*

Date: Nov. 2
To: Rachel Richards, Cynthia Farrell, & Patrice Eller
DHS Office of Adult Service, Lansing
Subj: Monique King

You always hear the negative; I wanted to share a recent positive experience and commend the work of one of your Adult Protective Services workers in Wayne County, Monique King.

Ms. King contacted me for assistance with a very complex case involving likely financial exploitation.

Ms. King could have opted to do the minimum for her client but instead truly went above and beyond in assisting her client and advocating on her client's behalf.

Because of Ms. King's efforts I believe her client will be spared from further exploitation and harm. It's too early to know the final outcome of the case but I wanted you to know how impressed I am with Ms. King's integrity, passion and dedication.

I know there are amazing workers like Ms. King doing this work every day and I thank you all for what you do!

Lynne McCollum

Office of Services to the Aging, Lansing

■ *Monique King works at South Central Child and Family Services in Detroit. The addressees are adult services administrators in Lansing. Edward Michaels, program section manager at South Central CFS, submitted this letter for publication.*

**Your letters,
intercepted
and otherwise**

**See you
in 2006!**

Submitting letters for publication

Client letters praising employees are very popular with other employees. To submit a customer letter for publication:

1. Ensure your supervisor knows about this and approves.
2. Have the customer sign **Consent for Publication** form, which is downloadable from the MS Word template as form **0199.dot**
3. Send the letter and a copy of the signed consent form to me by e-mail or by fax (517-373-8471).
4. Include the letter writer's hometown and the job classification(s) of the employee(s) cited in the letter.

If I have questions about the letter after that I will contact you. Please let me know if I can help. I look forward to hearing from you.

Larry VanDeSande

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